

Message Text

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P R 151450Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1989

INFO AMEMBASSY BLANTYRE

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LUSAKA 1544

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, RH, PINS, ZA

SUBJECT: RHODESIA: ZAMBIANS CONCERNED OVER PROSPECTS FOR VICTORIA
FALLS MEETING BUT NOT PESSIMISTIC

1. SUMMARY. PRESIDENTIAL ADVISOR MARK CHONA CALLED AMBASSADOR OVER TO STATE HOUSE BEFORE 8 A.M. FRIDAY AUG 15 FOR NEAR HOUR-AND-HALF-LONG BRIEFING ON RHODESIAN SETTLEMENT PROSPECTS, AND ZAMBIAN AND ANC REACTION TO IAN SMITH'S AUG 14 STATEMENTS IN PARLIAMENT AND OVER RHODESIAN RADIO. ANC CHAIRMAN BISHOP MUZOREWA DESCRIBED AS DEMORALIZED BY SMITH'S DENIGRATING REMARKS ("ANC A DECAPITATED CHICKEN") AND IN NEED OF MORAL SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT TO PUSH AHEAD OVER LAST AND HARDEST MILE OF ROAD TOWARDS SETTLEMENT. DESPITE SMITH'S LATEST SPANNER IN THE WORKS, ZAMBIA STILL HOPEFUL MEETING AT VICTORIA FALLS CAN GO FORWARD, BUT HAS ADVISED SMITH OF ITS EXASPERATION OVER HIS PROVOCATIVE PUBLIC UTTERANCES AND HAS SENT MESSAGE TO SAG PM VORSTER IN SOUTH AMERICA THAT ALL NOT GOING SMOOTHLY AND ATMOSPHERE CLOUDED. END SUMMARY.

2. CHONA GAVE ME COPY OF FIVE-POINT PRETORIA AGREEMENT OF AUG 9,
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JOINTLY DRAFTED BY SOUTH AFRICANS AND RHODESIANS. SAID POINT ON

COMMITTEE WORK WITHIN RHODESIA PRESENTS PROBLEMS FOR ANC AS SMITH CHANGED PLAN FOR COMMITTEE DISCUSSION AND DRAFTING SESSIONS TO NEGOTIATING SESSIONS. NATIONALISTS GENUINELY FEAR DETENTIONS IF COMMITTEE WORK IS HELD IN RHODESIA. SMITH'S REFERENCE TO NEW INFILTRATIONS BY TERRORISTS AND HIS CALL TO STEP UP SECURITY VIGILANCE IN NORTHEASTERN RHODESIA ARE ALSO DISTURBING TO ANC QUITE APART FROM SMITH'S THREATENING TONE AND OFFENSIVE REMARKS.

3. IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING SMITH'S STATEMENT TO PARLIAMENT, CHONA FEARED RADIO ADDRESS WOULD PRESENT MORE PROBLEMS AND SO TELEPHONED RHODESIAN SECURITY OFFICIAL DEREK ROBINSON, TELLING HIM NOT TO COME TO ZAMBIZ TO PREPARE FOR VICTORIA FALLS BRIDGE MEETING UNTIL SITUATION CLARIFIED.

4. TRYING FOR BALANCE IN HIS ASSESSMENT OF PROSPECTS FOR SETTLEMENT, CHONA SAID HE WAS HAPPY WITH SMITH'S MENTION OF POSSIBILITIES FOR PROGRESS WITHIN NEXT TWO MONTHS. HE WONDERED ALOUD IF SMITH WASN'T DELIBERATELY INTENSIFYING HIS PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE TO TEST METTLE AS WELL AS LEADERSHIP OF BISHOP MUZOREWA, SOMEWHAT LIKE ATHLETES DO AGAINST OPPONENTS BEFORE A BIG GAME. CHONA SAID ANC WOULD CERTAINLY HAVE TO GET USED TO INSULTS BECAUSE THEY WOULD CONTINUE RATHER THAN ABATE ONCE THE BLACKS ENTERED GOVERNMENT.

5. CHONA WILL URGE BISHOP MUZOREWA TO STIFFEN HIS SPINE AND STAND UP TO SMITH IN PUBLIC RETORT WHICH WOULD DEMONSTRATE HIS TOUGHNESS, RESOLVE AND READINESS FOR LONG HAUL. CHONA MADE NO COMMENT ON MUZOREWA'S PUBLIC STATEMENT THAT ANC REJECTS IDEA OF COMMITTEE SESSIONS BEING HELD INSIDE RHODESIA. (LUSAKA 1534) CHONA SAID BISHOP AND ANC NEEDED HELP IN IMPROVING THEIR PUBLIC RELATIONS AS THEY ARE UP AGAINST PAST MASTER WHO WILL KEEP HARASSING RIGHT UP UNTIL AUG 25 MEETING AND BEYOND.

6. CHONA ANNOYED BECAUSE OF SMITH'S VAGUE REFERENCES TO FINAL CONSTITUTION "OUTSIDE RHODESIA IF NECESSARY" NOTWITHSTANDING FIRM COMMITMENT TO MEETING IN LONDON UNDER BRITISH CHAIRMANSHIP.

7. BISHOP DESCRIBED AS GOOD AND HONEST MAN, BUT EASILY UP OR DOWN OVER PROSPECTS FOR SETTLEMENT. CHONA CONFIDED IT WAS EASIER TO SELL SAMORA MACHEL TO THE PORTUGUESE THAN THE BISHOP TO THE CONFIDENTIAL

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SOUTH AFRICANS AND SMITH.

8. CHONA SAID HE WOULD BE CALLING IN THE BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER TO URGE HIM AS WELL AS ME BO BOUY UP THE BISHOP'S SPIRITS IN ANY CONVERSATIONS SO BISHOP WOULD STAND TALL AND FIRM IN DEALING WITH SMITH. CHONA ALSO PASSING MESSAGE TO PM VORSTER IN SOUTH AMERICA ADVISING HIM SMITH MISBEHAVING IN HIS ABSENCE AND THINGS TENDING

TO GET OUT OF HAND.

9. CHONA CONCERNED ABOUT ADVICE SMITH GETTING FROM JACK GAYLORD, SECY TO CABINET, WHO HE FEELS IS BAD INFLUENCE, TENDING TO OFFSET GOOD INFLUENCE OF MINISTER OF INFORMATION DEKOCK, WHO HE SEES AS PROMISING YOUNG POLITICIAN. HE IS CONVINCED SMITH, BOLSTERED BY GAYLORD, IS REAL OBSTACLE TO SUCCESSFUL NEGOTIATIONS, NOT MOST WHITES IN RHODESIA WHO SEE MULTIRACIAL SOCIETY AS INEVITABLE; HET MUCH MORE PROPAGANDA FOR MAJORITY RULE NEEDED IN RHODESIAN MEDIA. LEADERSHIP OF RHODESIAN SECURITY FORCES ALSO SAID BY CHONA TO FAVOR MAJORITY RULE AND THEY HAVE TOLD SMITH THERE IS NO HOPE IN ANY ALL-OUT WAR.

10. DISCOURAGED BY WAY BISHOP HAS APPARENTLY SAGGED UNDER SMITH'S LATEST ASSAULT, CHONA BECOMING INCREASINGLY DIS- ENCHANTED WITH HIS THANKLESS GO-BETWEEN ROLE WHICH HE SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO ABANDON SOON. SAID SAG PM VORSTER AT PRETORIA MEETING ALSO INDICATED HIS ANXIOUSNESS TO WASH HIS HANDS OF ENTIRE AFFAIR AND LEAVE IT COMPLETELY UP TO PRINCIPALS.

11. COMMENT: THERE IS CERTAIN ELEMENT OF POSTURING GOING ON BEFORE SMITH AND THE BISHOP TAKE ONE ANOTHER ON AT VICTORIA FALLS, WHICH WE BELIEVE THEY EVENTUALLY WILL. DESPITE CHONA'S COMPLAINTS, ZAMBIA IS UNLIKELY TO FALL OUT NOW THAT THE TWO HORSES ARE THIS CLOSE TO THE WATER WITH SO MUCH ATTENDANT FANFARE AND SO MUCH AT STAKE. AND SMITH, FOR ALL HIS POSTURING, SEEMS TO BE MORE CONCERNED WITH A DECENT PLACE IN HISTORY AS A MAN OF PEACE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. CHONA SAID VORSTER DELIBERATELY MADE SMITH FEEL ISOLATED AND ALONE IN PRETORIA. PRESENT STATE OF PLAY POINTS UP ONCE AGAIN HIGHLY FRAGILE NATURE OF ANC LEADERSHIP AND ITS SENSITIVITIES. WHILE CHONA SEEMED TO BE SUGGESTING THAT

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MEN LIKE JOSHUA NKOMO, WITH BROAD POPULAR SUPPORT IN RHODESIA, MIGHT MEASURE UP MORE TO SMITH'S PROVOCATIONS AND CHALLENGES, RECURRING THOUGHT OF CHANGING LEADERSHIP IS RULED OUT AT THIS LATE STAGE BECAUSE OF DAMAGE TO FORWARD MOMENTUM. AT LEAST ZAMBIA APPEARS RECONCILED TO PAYING COSTS OF WEAKER, COMPROMISE LEADER.

WHEN I ASKED ABOUT THE REV. NDABANINGI SITHOLE, CHONA AGREED HE WAS HIGHLY INTELLIGENT, WITH LESS OF A POLITICAL FOLLOWING THAN NKOMO, NOT SICK AS PEOPLE ALLEGE, SINCERELY DEDICATED TO PEACE, BUT NOT THE MAN TO BRING RHODESIAN NATIONALISTS TOGETHER OR UNDERTAKE THE TASK AT HAND.

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